

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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CINCPAC

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TAGS: PFOR, MY, BX, UK, SN, ASEAN

SUBJ: POLITICAL NOTES: EXTERNAL ISSUES--BRUNEI/SINGAPORE;

ASEAN AND INDOCHINESE NATIONS; MALAYSIA AS TARGET OF

BIG POWER RIVALRY

REF: A. KUALA LUMPUR 7126 050755Z DEC 75 (NOTAL)

1. MALAYSIA/BRUNEI/SINGAPORE. IN RESPONSE TO "ORAL" QUESTION
(ACTUALLY SUBMITTED IN WRITING IN ADVANCE) IN DEWAN RAKYAT (LOWER
HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT) DECEMBER 2, FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDDEEN
SAID THAT UK AND SINGAPORE HAD NOTIFIED GOM OF THEIR MILITARY
EXERCISE IN BRUNEI LAST AUGUST. RITHAUDDEEN REPORTEDLY STATED
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GOM BELIEVED EXERCISE WAS HELD AS PART OF SINGAPORE'S TRAINING

PROGRAM TO KEEP ITS TROOPS IN A STATE OF FITNESS, ADDING THAT IT WAS NOT UP TO MALAYSIA TO DECIDE WHETHER SINGAPORE SHOULD SEND ITS TROOPS TO BRUNEI. (COMMENT: SINGAPOREAN TRAINING EXERCISE IN BRUNEI HAD AROUSED SOME RESENTMENT AMONG JINGOISTIC ELEMENTS IN MALAYSIA AS MEDDLESOME COMPLICATING FACTOR IN THEIR EFFORTS TO PUSH FOR THE SPEEDY "DECOLONIZATION OF BRUNEI," AND CONCOMITANTLY, ITS EVENTUAL ABSORPTION INTO MALAYSIA. SEE KL 5432 -- NOTAL. AUZHOUDDEN'S LOW KEY AND FORTHRIGHT REMARKS CONTRAST WITH LAVISH PRESS PLAY GIVEN BRUNEI ISSUE IN LOCAL PRESS. WHICH INCLUDES FULL COVERAGE OF STATEMENTS BY BRUNEI PEOPLE'S PARTY -- PARTAI RAKYAT BRUNEI -- REPRESENTATIVES BEFORE UN COMMITTEE OF 24 AND IN OTHER FORUMS, AS WELL AS STREAM OF EDITORIAL COMMENTARY FAVORING "DECOLONIZATION" OF BRUNEI. "POINT MAN" FOR JINGOIST, AYZI-BRITISH LINE IS SARAWAK CHIEF MINISTER RAHMAN YAAKUB, WHO ON DECEMBER 8 WARNED THAT PRESENCE OF UK AUTHORITY IN BG NEI POSES THREAT TO ASEAN COUNTRIES AS WELL AS A HINDRANCE TO IMPLEMENTATION OF 1970 KUALA LUMPUR DECLARATION CALLING FOR CREATION OF A "ZONE OF PEACE, FREEDOM AND NEUTRALITY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.")

2. ASEAN AND INDOCHINESE NATIONS. FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDDEEN, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION IN DEWAN RAKYAT DECEMBER 19 REGARDING POSSIBLE MEMBERSHIP OF INDOCHINA STATES IN ASEAN, REPLIED THAT ASEAN WAS READY TO COOPERATE WITH THE NEW GOVERNMENTS OF THESE NATIONS AND TO OFFER ITS HAND OF FRIENDSHIP. HOWEVER, HE COMMENTED, IT WAS UP TO INDOCHINA COUNTRIES TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO JOIN THE REGIONAL GROUPING.

3. BIG POWERS AND MALAYSIA. DATUK HARUN IDRIS, PROMINENT FIGURE IN DOMINANT UMNO PARTY WHO CURRENTLY IS FIGHTING FOR HIS POLITICAL FUTURE IN FACR OF FORMAL CHARGES OF CORRUPTION AGAINST HIM, ALLEGED THAT MALAYSIA CURRENTLY IS FOCUS OF BIG POWER RIVALRY DUE TO ITS STRATEGIC POSITION AND ROLE AS PRIMARY PRODUCER OF KEY COMMODITIES SUCH AS TIN AND OIL PALM. HARUN, WHO IS NOW ON LEAVE FROM HIS POST AS CHIEF MINISTER OF SELANGOR STATE, OBSTENSIBLY "TO PREPARE HIS DEFENSE", RECENTLY HAS TRAVELED OUTSIDE HIS STATE IN APPARENT BID TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR HIS CASE IN PENDING COURT PROCEEDINGS. HE REPORTEDLY TOLD GATHERING OF UMNO YOUTH IN IPOH DECEMBER 17 THAT ALTHOUGH IT WAS DIFFICULT TO PROVE BIG POWER INVOLVEMENT IN MALAYSIA, ACCOUNTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN US AND RELXATIONS BY CIA POINTED IN THAT DIRECTION, WITH RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT BY NEW DIRECTOR OF CIA (SIC) HE COULD NOT TELL SENATE COMMITTEE U.S. WOULD NEVER SUPPORT COUP D' ETAT SHOWING THAT BIG POWERS WOULD NOT HESITATE TO INTERFERE IN AFFAIRS OF ANOTHER COUNTRY. DECEMBER 23 PRESS REPORTED THAT KASSIM AHMAD, LEFTIST LEADER OF MINISCULE MALAYAN PEOPLES' SOCIALIST PARTY (PARTAI SOSIALIS RAKYAT MALAYA) HAD SEIZED ON HARUN'S REMARKS, CONDEMNING "BIG POWER INTERFERENCE"

AND CALLING FOR EXPULSION OF PEACE CORPS FROM MALAYSIA ON
GROUNDS "WE KNOW THAT THE US IS USING THESE SO-CALLED VOLUNTEERS
TO INTERFERE IN THE AFFAIRS OF OUR COUNTRY." (COMMENT: WE
INTERPRET HARUN'S STATEMENT AS EFFORT TO SEIZE ON SENSATIONAL
ISSUES TO BOLSTER HIS NATIONALIST CREDENTIALS WITHIN UMNO
IN CONTEXT POWER STRUGGLE WITH RAZAK ADMINISTRATION, WHICH
NOW TAKING FORM OF LEGAL BATTLE OVER CHARGES OF CORRUPTION,
ABUSE OF OFFICIAL POSITION, AND MISUSE OF PARTY FUNDS FILED
BY GOM AGAINST FORMER.)
UNDERHILL

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